

# UNIFORMITY OF DRUG PROVING.

READ BEFORE

The Semi-Annual Meeting of the Homœopathic Medical Society of Oneida  
County, N.-Y., June 18, 1861.

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ONE of the essential principles of homœopathy is the instituting of thorough and reliable provings of drugs by healthy persons; we need not therefore allude to its necessity or importance, or advocate such a procedure. It is doubtless conceded by each one of us, that the great work of the homœopathic profession of the present day is to obtain, as far as may be, a complete pathogenesis of every known medicinal substance, by the collection of which in future years there may be prepared a perfect *materia medica*.

With this great work in view it is a source of encouragement to know, that the morbid effects of drugs upon the human system are essentially the same in all places and in all ages. The comparatively recent provings of *Helleborus-niger* by Hahnemann reveal precisely the same symptomatic aberrations that resulted from its administration by Hippocrates and his disciples. It follows therefore, that a perfect and useful *materia medica* must be based upon exhaustive and complete provings. Each remedy must be proved and reproved until no new symptoms are produced. Then, and not till then, can the work as far as performed, be considered finished and completed.

What a mass of unimportant symptoms have been incorporated into the works in use at the present day! So unsatisfactory is the study of the pathogenesis of many remedies now in frequent use, that probably many of us are obliged to depend upon our own experience rather than the published record, though this, imperfect as it is, forms a basis of our experience. Is this multitude of symptoms to be transmitted

without change or improvement to posterity? Having received almost from Hahnemann's own hands the best materia medica that has ever been given to the world, though necessarily imperfect and incomplete, are we to deliver it to succeeding generations without alteration or amendment? Obviously improvements can and ought to be made. Let us as homœopathists consider well the most direct and speedy methods of accomplishing them.

We believe a great improvement would be made could a combination of effort be secured upon *one drug at a time*.

The proving of a drug by a single person is insufficient to establish its character. In order to ascertain its true therapeutic powers the observations of many individuals must be compared. Only when the results are contrasted, verified, and reduced to a system can its worth and power as a remedy be determined or affirmed. Provings only become valuable by confirmation; hence the necessity of repeating them many times, and in every variety of condition and circumstance, in order finally to separate the essential from the accidental symptoms. On this point we quote a few sentences from an address delivered at the late meeting of the New-York State Homœopathic Medical Society, by Dr. W. H. Watson, of Utica:

"If Hahnemann had done nothing else he would be entitled to the lasting gratitude of mankind, for his suggestions in regard to acquiring a knowledge of the medicinal powers of drugs, by proving them on the healthy subject. This is, *par excellence*, the glorious mission of the homœopathic physician. While our allopathic brethren, under the guidance of Rokitsansky and his colleagues, are rendering great service to the world by elucidating the effects of disease upon the system, through their researches in the domain of pathology; to us belongs the greater honor of discovering and accurately applying those remedies which will relieve the diseased conditions brought to light by the knife of the pathologist. It is only by large numbers of persons that reliable provings of drugs can be carried on. The constant symptoms obtained by hundreds of individuals from the administration of the same drug, must necessarily be its characteristic symptoms, whereas many

of the symptoms obtained by a single prover might be purely imaginary, or the result of some accidental cause, and have no relation of cause and effect to the drug which had been administered. There is obviously no standard by which to correct errors from this source; but when an hundred persons in good health are affected in a certain manner after taking a particular drug, the conclusion is irresistible, that the symptoms thus produced are the effects of the drug which had been administered."

Hahnemann informs us, that "it is only by repeated observations made upon *a great number of individuals* of both sexes, properly selected for the purpose from among a variety of constitutions, that we can acquire a pretty accurate knowledge of the whole of the morbid effects that a medicine is capable of producing."

These are the words of the founder of our system. Are we at the present time carrying out his instructions? Are the provings of our day performed by "*a great number of individuals*?" Are there five hundred, or one hundred, or even fifty persons, engaged at the present time upon any one particular drug? There are upwards of three thousand homœopathic physicians on this continent. How many of this vast number have during the past year made a careful proving of any drug upon themselves? We venture to say, not one hundred, perhaps not fifty. If the latter number, no one will deem us guilty of disparagement, when we affirm that the self-sacrificing labors of these fifty persons have availed little towards accomplishing the great work which devolves upon us as homœopathists. Very little real progress has been made, because the inceptive labor of commencing a large number of drugs has been performed, while a small part only has been completed. If these fifty persons have been engaged in developing the pathogenesis of as many different drugs, a long time will necessarily elapse before the results of their labors can be made available in practice, whereas if they had united their labors upon one of those remedies, it would in comparatively a short period of time have been completed, real progress would have been made, and the remedy have become immediately and permanently useful.



The plan we propose is, therefore, to establish some method of coöperation that will unite the labors of all the provers on this continent, for a definite time, upon one drug. Let all who are willing to engage in this truly profitable and enduring labor prove one drug at the same time. Let trials of one drug *only* be made during the remaining months of this year; and if, at the close of the year, the provings are still incomplete, let it be continued for a longer period, until in the judgment of those appointed to superintend this movement, the drug shall have been fairly tested; then, and not till then, let another be selected. Thus uniformity and concert of action, and thorough and speedy discovery of the therapeutic powers of drugs will be attained, and that which now requires eight or ten years to perform, will be accomplished just as well in one or two.

In conclusion, the committee would simply allude to the peculiar adaptation of this continent to labors of this kind. It is inhabited by one race, speaking the same language, having every facility for frequent and rapid communication, and presenting every variety of locality, climate, temperature, and hygrometic conditions of the atmosphere.

And further, that the American Institute of Homœopathy, in being national in extent and influence, is eminently fitted to give direction, uniformity, and efficiency to this most important work.

L. B. WELLS, } *Committee.*  
H. M. PAINE, }

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*Semi-Annual Meeting of the Homœopathic Medical Society  
of Oneida Co.*

The society held its fourth semi-annual session at the office of Dr. L. B. Wells, in the city of Utica, June, 18, 1861. At the appointed time, the President, Dr. W. H. Watson, called the meeting to order.

Ten members were present. Dr. C. W. Boyce, Secretary of the Cayuga Co. Homœopathic Medical Society, and Dr. J. R. White, President of the Otsego Co. Homœopathic Medical Society, were also present.

A report from the committee on medical societies, appointed at the last meeting, was accepted. The following is an extract:

"The committee were soon convinced that an abstract of the laws was insufficient to meet the wants of the Homœopathic profession. The laws relating to the formation and management of medical societies are not readily accessible, and having been amended and repealed in so many instances, considerable difficulty exists in ascertaining the precise meaning and interest of the statute. In order also, to secure efficiency and uniformity in the organization of these associations, it was resolved to publish in pamphlet form *all* the laws of the state which relate to this subject. A pamphlet of forty-six pages was accordingly prepared, and five hundred copies printed, of which about four hundred were distributed to the homœopathic physicians of this state. This effort more than any other, has doubtless, conduced to the very great progress made during the past six months. At the commencement of this year, only seven county homœopathic medical societies existed; now sixteen are formed, entitled to sixty-one delegates to the state association."

The committee on Uniformity of Drug-Proving offered a report which elicited a profitable and interesting discussion, participated in by most of the members present. The report was adopted.

Dr. Wells advocated the use of both high and low potencies in the proving of drugs. Arsenicum 200, has frequently produced obstinate constipation, while the opposite is the effect of a low potency.

Dr. Boyce related a case which had long resisted low attenuations, but was speedily relieved by a single pellet of Lachesis 2000. A successful expedient adopted by a number of homœopathic physicians in this state, is, to commence treatment with low attenuations, and gradually ascend to the highest.

Dr. Wells related an obstinate case of chronic diarrhœa, which, after resisting low potencies, readily yielded to Lachesis 200.

Dr. Scudder inquired whether the high potencies usually produce good results except when preceded by the low. In a case of chronic diarrhœa, in a consumptive young man a single dose of Lycopodium 1000 arrested the discharge, and restored his usual strength. The diet was not changed. He was living on two parts cream to one of molasses, and could take nothing else. His mother has ulceration of the lungs, and has been frequently relieved of a troublesome cough by Calcarea 600. Croup is often cured by a few doses of the 200th potency of Aconite, Spongia and Hepar.

Dr. Boyce briefly alluded to the beneficial effects of Aconite in epidemic croup, that remedy alone proving rapidly and uniformly successful.

Dr. Scudder related a detailed account of a case of chronic bilious diarrhœa: though several relapses occurred, was finally permanently cured by China, 1, and Mercurius, 3.

Dr. Wells thought more speedy effects would have resulted from the administration of higher potencies.

Dr. Bishop effected a permanent cure upon himself of occasional attacks of diarrhœa, by a dose of Pulsatilla, 500, the remedy having afforded temporary relief only in a low potency.

Reports of standing committees being next in order, Dr. Wells, Chairman of the Committee on Materia Medica, expressed his increasing confidence in the drug (*Æsculus-hippocastanum*) now being proved by members of the Society, and hoped more extensive trials would be made, both in the low, as well as the high attenuations.

Dr. Hill, Chairman of the Committee on the Homœopathic Treatment of Surgical Cases, reported two cases of fracture: one of the radius, and the other of the clavicle—both successfully treated.

Dr. Wells, Chairman of the Committee on Diseases of Children, read an instructive and interesting paper on Cholera Infantum. The pathology of the disease was shown to be inflammatory, and accordingly Aconite was recommended as a highly useful remedy in this serious and often fatal malady. The paper was followed by a verbal statement, illustrative of the beneficial effects of Aconite in the case of his own child. So great is his confidence in this remedy, that he now uniformly commences the treatment with it, in alternation usually with *Ipecacuanha*.

Dr. J. A. Paine has for a number of years found it very useful in the disease under consideration, and also in dysentery. In the disease last mentioned he seldom finds any other remedies necessary than Aconite and Mercurius-corr. A cure has uniformly followed the use of these remedies in three or four days.

The Society adjourned to meet at two o'clock.

AFTERNOON SESSION.—Dr. W. H. Watson, President in the chair.

Dr. J. A. Paine, Chairman of the Committee on Diseases of Females, reported several cases illustrative of a method of treatment, which in many instances has proved successful. The cases were ordinary inflammation of the tincæ and uterus, both in the married and unmarried. The peculiarity of the treatment consists chiefly in the topical application of the same remedies employed internally. The remedies are incorporated with mutton-suet, by slowly melting the latter, and while cooling, and still in a semi-fluid state, add the remedy in the form of tincture or powder. After stirring the cerate a few minutes, pour out on plates, and when nearly cold, cut into blocks about half an inch square. To remove these blocks, the plate should be heated slightly, when they will readily slip off.

The cerates employed thus far have been chiefly Iodine, Calcarea, Thuja, Belladonna, Hammamelis, Opium, and Pulsatilla. Calcarea, Iodine, and Thuja have proved very efficacious in relieving congestion, inflammation, and ulceration of the uterus, tincæ, and vagina; Hammamelis for menorrhagia; and Opium, Pulsatilla, and Belladonna for dysmenorrhœa.

The applications are usually repeated at intervals of from four to ten days. In several cases the sensitiveness was at first so great, that the cerates could not be introduced as far as the uterus, but after a few applications the tenderness diminished, so that but little inconvenience or suffering was experienced.

The medium for applying the remedies should be neither too soft nor too hard. It should be firm enough to be introduced without breaking up into small pieces, and soft enough to commence melting or dissolving as soon as introduced. The mutton-suet is found to remain three or four days, and during this time is constantly setting free the medicinal substance with which it is saturated. The object intended is to lubricate the inflamed and sensitive surfaces, and prevent irritation from the natural secretions of the parts, which in most diseased conditions are more or less acrid. By this method the remedy is con-



stantly and directly in contact with the diseased surface, and thus an immediate impression is produced, and a healthful reaction awakened much sooner than can be secured by the internal administration alone of the same medicine.

Dr. J. C. Raymond, Chairman of the Committee on Prevailing Epidemics, reported the treatment of a few cases of diphtheria, all of which had yielded to the ordinary remedies.

Dr. Watson had observed in several instances an entire absence of pain or difficult deglutition, even in the advanced stage of the disease.

Dr. Raymond thought such cases were exceptions.

Dr. White stated, that the disease had prevailed extensively in Otsego County. He had adopted the plan, when called to prescribe, to examine all the members of the family, and on several occasions had discovered the disease where none was supposed to exist. He successfully treated fourteen cases with the usual remedies—Belladonna and Mercurius-iod.

Dr. Watson employs the Biniodide in preference to the Protoiodide of Mercury.

Dr. Bishop relies chiefly upon Kreosote.

Dr. Mower, after trying several remedies, finally selected Antim.-tart. and Mercurius-iod. With these he has successfully treated several severe cases.

Dr. Wells considers it a constitutional disease, affiliated with typhus, and has found Rhus-tox., Arsenicum, and Carbo-veg. most useful. Local applications avail little permanent or even temporary relief.

The Secretary read a brief report. The following extracts are of general interest:

"All the members of the Bureau of Materia Medica, appointed at the late meeting of the state homœopathic medical society have consented to introduce *Æsculus Hippocastanum* into their respective districts. . . . Since our last annual meeting ten county homœopathic medical societies have been organized, making sixteen, entitled to a delegation of sixty-one members to the state association, nearly half as many as there are members of assembly. . . . In this work many homœopathists in the state take a deep interest, as the following communication clearly indicates:

"That the homœopathists of this state are lamentably behind in the instituting of means to the advancement of the great principle which they represent, is a fact too well known to require comment. This is so for several reasons:

"1. They are, as a class, too much crowded with professional engagements.

"2. They rely too much upon the intrinsic merit of their cause, forgetting that, although truth never really dies, yet its final triumph is seldom attained except by the earnest and untiring efforts of its votaries.

"3. They are, and have been waiting for leaders. Give them but these, and a few stirring appeals would, I believe, rally them in large numbers to the collective support of the law '*Similia Similibus Curantur*.'

"Believe me, I take a deep interest in the effort which is now making to unite them in concerted action; and rest assured that my feeble endeavors shall not be wanting in this long neglected, much needed undertaking."

The Treasurer's report was accepted, showing an indebtedness of \$64.36., incurred by publishing the laws relating to the practice of medicine, which have been distributed to the homœopathists of this state.

On motion of Dr. Hill a tax of \$2.00 in addition to the annual tax was assessed upon each member of the society.

On Motion of Dr. Stebbins, Dr. C. W. Boyce of Auburn and Dr. J. R. White of Butternuts, were by vote of the society elected honorary members.

Dr. Wells was chosen delegate to attend the next meeting of the Otsego Co. homœopathic medical society, and Dr. Watson delegate to the next meeting of the Cayuga Co. homœopathic medical society.

The society adjourned to meet the third Tuesday in October.

H. M. PAINE, *Secretary*.

